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DAHU PEDAGOGUES ARE TOLD HOW TO TEACH THEIR PUPILS READING

Miss Anne Van Schaick Gives Interesting Talk at Annual Meeting of Association

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Oahu Teachers' Association Friday on the subject of "Reading," Miss Anne Van Schaick of the Territorial Normal School said:

"It is rather interesting to note that in 1450 A. D. the first English reading book was prepared for school called the Horn book. It was simply a flat piece of paper. On it was printed the alphabet, in large and small letters, the vowels and several columns of abs, ebs with the ritualistic phrase 'In the name of the Father.' The paper was protected by a thin sheet of horn which gave the device its name. The Horn book was used in the early colonial schools.

"The early primers were intended for religious instruction. The word primer is derived from 'prime,' the first canonical hour in the Roman Catholic church.

"The New England primer opened with a series of scriptural texts and closed with 'Spiritual Milk for American Babes Drawn from the Breasts of Both Testaments for Their Soul's Nourishment.'

"So much for the early primers. Today we have more books than we know how to use. We have to select. The first question is how shall we select supplementary reading? Percival Chubb of the Ethical Culture School of New York says we must take into account the tastes and interests of the child, his powers of comprehension and appreciation, the needs of his emotional nature as they determine the growth of character.

"We become like what we constantly admire. The boy in the Great Stone Face loves the granite profile and loving it grows to like it. Boys will learn to be brave, self-reliant, manly, thoughtful of others and straightforward by reading in the woods with Hwatha, sailing the seas with Sindbad, building stockades with Crusoe, fighting dragons with Jason, jousting with Galahad, playing football with Tom Brown and at quills with Oysseus.

"The child is a hero worshipper and if you do not give him a true hero he will set in his heart a tawdry or poor imitation of one. He will worship and imitate the bully of his school, because the bully is strong and aggressive; but let him once know King Arthur and the Chevalier Bayard and he will lose admiration for every sort of bully from that time forth. If during the first 12 years of a child's life he has been made familiar with the best literature that is adapted to his widening range of thought, there need be no fear that he will read unworthy books.

"We have given in our course of study the minimum amount of reading. We are not limited as to the maximum amount. On the board is an ideal list of supplementary reading. Let us aim to have the pupils become familiar with several of the

books suggested for each grade. It is well to train the child to follow up the author he likes. Well-born books always have relatives. Follow them up.

"Raskin says 'I am unable to say to what extent my thoughts have been guided by books.'

"Andrew Lang the great English writer, says at six he read the Arabian Nights and felt that it was a glimpse of Paradise. At seven he read 'The Lady of the Lake,' at nine Dickens and Longfellow and Shakespeare. We have not precocious children like him but we have hungry minds.

"John Dewey of Columbia University says, 'One can pick out the children who learned to read at home. They read naturally.' One cannot read naturally when he reads for reading's sake. Use books that meet and supply the child's mental needs. No scheme of learning to read can supply this want. Drill on form hinders by its monotony and repetition. We must have a personal hunger for what we read.

"Wrong habits of reading are responsible that pupils cannot use books effectively. cannot get the point, cannot make synopses, and get the characteristics.

"Miss Jessie R. Smith of Santa Rosa, California, teaches reading as taught here in our school. The setting for the story is first given. The story is related in the best form the teacher's instincts can dictate. Next she has reproduction, both oral and written, then the pupils read.

"The pupils must have a picture of the word before they can give the word. Have the pupils do much silent reading. Letting them read to pick out the big thoughts is good mental discipline. It is suggested that the teacher sometimes read the entire story or poem in the beginning. The teacher must read well. The pupils will not imitate her but they will get the feeling. Help the pupils by giving them word drills. Be sure to give the meaning used in the text. Select one or two words every day and try to make them a part of the children's spoken vocabulary.

"The child needs constant repetition. For the word drill after you have given the correct meaning and used the word several times in sentences let the child use the word. In the upper grades have him look up the meaning in the dictionary and compare with your definition or synonym. A good device for teaching pronouncing and synonyms is to have two children with pointers at the board, a third pupil at the seat pronouncing the word. The pupil who first finds the word in the list pronounces it and gives a sentence using it. This is for quickness.

"George Herbert Palmer says we are too lazy to swell our words to meet our needs. We let our vocabularies be limited because we are not willing to exert ourselves to use the right word. Not the big pompous word, but the simple everyday word. Our speaking vocabulary needs help. Mr. Palmer says the word does not belong to us until we have used it three times.

"It has been suggested that the pupil learns to read by imitation. That places a hard task upon the teacher, for no teacher should dare read a poem to children that she herself does not know perfectly. It means hours of hard study and practice for the teacher, even in the primary grades. If one feels that she herself has not mastered the selection it is better not to attempt to read it to the pupil, but always give the setting and get the children in the atmosphere of the part to be read. We must, however, insist that the child has a thought back of the word. Insist that pupils learn to read rapidly to themselves. Huey says, 'Rapid readers have the firmest grasp of meanings and retain best what they read.' Continued practice in the prompt extraction of what the geography and history page has for the reader irrespective of how it would sound if read to others, must result in increasing considerably the average effective rate of reading. And such practice will develop the power to discriminate and to grasp the essential. One who has been practised in feeling values in reading will fly over such pages as have nothing. Don't be careless in rapid reading, but get the meanings rapidly. It must be remembered that each reader has his own maximum rate of effective reading and these maximums will vary greatly in the individuals.

"Reading to pick out big thoughts is mental discipline. Young people are interested in English if they are encouraged to express their real selves on topics that touch their actual lives.

"One author speaking of supplementary reading, suggested that the teacher read a portion of the story, creating atmosphere and interest, then give the book to the child to read silently and later the child tells the story.

"Reading from the beginning must be done to feed the child's soul, to nourish his imagination, his moral impulse, and his higher aspirations. The child should from the first read humanizing literature.

"One of the best ways to help the child is to insist on accurate memorizing. Give the child a general idea of Othello, then have him memorize 'Good Name in Man or Woman.'

"Good name in man and woman, rear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
Who steals my purse steals trash;
'Tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed."

"Each grade should have a list of memory selections—the teacher of the grade must review the selections from preceding grades and add a number of her own. In the upper grades pu-

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pils should learn long poems like "The Lady of Shalott." Once a week it is well to have declamations and recitations and quotations during the reading period.

"The primary and grammar grade teachers have the greatest opportunities to form and mold character. You reach all the children and your imprint is left with them forever. The high school, normal school and college teacher has to do only with the best. May our tongues be touched by Ponce de Leon's fire, that we may be understood of all whom we instruct. May no monotony of routine stifle our ardor. May our power and our love be renewed from day to day. May we be preserved in patience, fidelity, and ever fresh delights in this our high calling."



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